

California Public Utilities Commission Catalog of Programs and Services



I. Energy Programs: Gas and Electricity

California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE): Low income residential consumers enrolled in the program receive a 20% discount on gas and electricity bills and do not pay the higher electricity rates of Pacific Gas & Electric, San Diego Gas and Electric, and Southern California Edison – all usage above the first, baseline tier is billed at the second tier rate. Income limits through May 2006 are: \$27,700 a year for a household of 1 or 2 people, \$32,500 for 3, and add \$6,700 for each additional person. Call your utility to apply:

Pacific Gas & Electric	800-743-5000
Southern California Edison	800-447-6620
San Diego Gas & Electric	800-411-7343
Sierra Pacific Power	800-782-2507 (Portola)
	800-782-2498 (S. Lake Tahoe)
Southern Calif. Gas Co.	800-427-2200

Energy Efficiency: Services include rebates, insulation, energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs, home energy audits, and more. Call your utility to find out what is being offered. There is also a program to help low income consumers conserve energy and control costs. Eligible customers receive services from local community agencies and licensed contractors working for the utilities. Annual income amounts are the same as the CARE program, except consumers that are over 60 years of age or handicapped may qualify even if they earn a little more than the CARE limits.

Pacific Gas & Electric	800-933-9555
Southern California Edison	800-736-4777
San Diego Gas & Electric	800-411-7343
Sierra Pacific Power	800-782-2507 (Portola)
	800-782-2498 (S. Lake Tahoe)
Southern Calif. Gas Co.	800-331-7593

Energy Assistance Funds: Utility shareholders and customers donate money to help qualified low-income, elderly, or disabled customers pay their energy bills. Generally, a one-time bill payment is granted per year. Call:

Pacific Gas & Electric	800-743-5000
Southern California Edison	800-447-6620
San Diego Gas & Electric	800-411-7343
Sierra Pacific Power	800-782-2507 (Portola)
	800-782-2498 (S. Lake Tahoe)
Southern Calif. Gas Co.	877-866-2066 (a toll-free call)

Need help with a utility complaint? Call 1-800-649-7570, or use the complaint form at: www.cpuc.ca.gov.

Want someone to speak at your community meeting? Call the CPUC Outreach Program, in Los Angeles: 213-576-7058, in San Diego: 619-525-4309, in Northern California: 415-703-2074. [Feb. 06]

Family Electric Rate Assistance Program (FERA): This program is for customers of Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas and Electric, and Pacific Gas and Electric Companies. Qualified consumers who enroll receive their tier 3 electricity usage discounted to tier 2 rates. Income qualifications for June 2005 through May 31, 2006 follow:

Household Size	Total Household Income	
	From:	To:
3 members	\$32,501	\$40,600
4 members	39,201	49,000
5 members	45,901	57,400
6 members	52,601	65,800
Each additional member add	6,701	8,400

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP): HEAP is a program funded by the federal government to help consumers pay their energy bills. The state's Department of Community Services and Development administers HEAP and related programs. Consumers apply at selected agencies near them. For referral to an agency, call: 800-433-4327 or visit online at: <http://www.csd.ca.gov/liheap.html>.

Level or Budget Payment Plans: Utilities offer plans to help consumers budget their energy bills by sending a monthly bill that is the same amount for 11 months. The bill for the 12th month compares how much has been paid in 11 months with how much the bills actually were and then bills or credits the difference.

Medical Baseline: This program is designed to provide assistance to consumers that rely on electricity or natural gas for life support equipment or to aid in bringing relief for certain medical conditions. It bills more units of energy at the lowest possible rate and the rest at the second tier. The customer and his/her physician complete an application. Please call your energy utility at the phone number on the bill for details and an application form.

II. Water Programs: CPUC-regulated water companies are starting to offer discounts to low-income consumers. Check with your water company to see if it offers this discount.

III. Telephone Programs

Telephone Service Discount Program: Universal Lifeline Telephone Service

Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (or ULTS) provides phone service at lower rates to consumers with qualifying incomes. The annual qualifying income amounts in effect through May 2006 are: \$20,600 for a 1-2 person household, \$24,300 for 3, and add \$4,900 for each additional household member. The monthly rate for unlimited local service is \$5.34 and measured service costs \$2.85. Installation is \$9.50. These rates apply statewide. Other benefits include not paying the Federal Communications Commission's network access charge and the ULTS surcharge. Call your local telephone company for an application and other details.

Telephone Equipment and Services: California Telephone Access Program

Special telephone equipment and services are available for free or reduced rates for persons certified to be deaf, disabled, or having an impairment of their hearing motion, speech, vision, or cognitive abilities that affect using the telephone. The qualifying condition may be temporary or ongoing. Contact the statewide center for an application and more details at 800-806-1191 (voice), 800 806-4474 (TTY), or 800-889-3974 (Fax). Applications and more details are online at www.ddtp.org.

California Relay Service. This connects callers using text telephones or telecommunications devices for the deaf (TTY/TDD) with users of any type of telephone equipment. This free service is available in English and Spanish by calling a three-digit number: 711

IV. Additional Services from the CPUC or its Regulated Utilities:

Third Party Notification: A residential consumer may designate someone to receive a notice if a bill is becoming past due. This "third party" is not responsible for paying the bill. Having this service does not change any of the rules for paying the bill. Call the utility's phone number on your gas, electric, or telephone bill to receive an application.

Payment Arrangements: Consumers unable to pay a bill by the time it is due should contact their utility company as soon as possible.

Pacific Gas & Electric	800-743-5000
Southern California Edison	800-655-4555
San Diego Gas & Electric	800-411-7343
Sierra Pacific Power	800-782-2507 (Portola)
	800-782-2498 (S. Lake Tahoe)
Southern Calif. Gas Co.	800-427-2200

Complaint Procedures:

Consumers having complaints about their bills should first contact their utility for an investigation. Consumers not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation may call the CPUC at 800-649-7570 (10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) to discuss filing an informal complaint. Consumers may also complain to the CPUC if they believe they are victims of utility scams, fraud, or their service provider was changed without their permission.

File complaints in these two ways:

- ✓ Write to the CPUC's Consumer Affairs Branch, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102 or
- ✓ Use the complaint form on the CPUC web site. www.cpuc.ca.gov

V. Internet - Web Sites: The Consumer Information Center on the CPUC web site provides more information on these and related subjects. Utilities have other programs available to consumers of all incomes that are described on their web pages. Energy conservation information is available from the utilities' web pages and many of the others listed below.

Government

Calif. PUC	www.cpuc.ca.gov
Dept. of Community Svcs & Development	www.csd.ca.gov
Calif. Energy Comm.	www.energy.ca.gov
Calif. Dept. of Consumer Affairs	www.dca.ca.gov
Federal Communications Commission	www.fcc.gov
Federal Trade Commission	www.consumer.gov

Energy Utilities

PG&E	www.pge.com
Edison	www.sce.com
SDG&E	www.sdge.com
Gas Co. (SoCalGas)	www.socalgas.com
Sierra Pacific Power:	www.sierrapacific.com

Telephone Utilities:

SBC (formerly Pacific Bell)	http://www.sbc.com
Verizon	http://www.verizon.com

Many other companies offer local telephone service in California. Look for them on the CPUC web site and in yellow page directories under "telecommunications."

Consumer Information:

www.consumerworld.org	www.nacaa.net
www.ucan.org	www.consumer-action.org
www.abtolls.com	www.nclnet.org